

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2043

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0767

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT

SUBJ: BEJARES SURVEYS THE SCENE

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER SEC.GEN. OF GOVERNMENT HERNAN BEJARES HELD TWO RECENT PRESS CONFERENCES IN WHICH HE STRONGLY HINTED PRESENT GOVT. PLANS TO REMAIN IN POWER AT LEAST 10 YEARS. HE DENOUNCED THOSE CHILEANS AT HOME AND ABROAD WHO SEEK TO "SABOTAGE" CHILE'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, PRAISED ELIMINATION OF PARTISAN POLITICS FROM CHILEAN LIFE, AND DESCRIBED PRESENT GOVT. AS NATIONALIST RATHER THAN MILITARY, SINCE IT REPRESENTS HOPES OF ALL CHILEANS WHO PUT THEIR COUNTRY FIRST. IN EARLIER PRESS CONFERENCE, BEJARES CALLED ON ALL CITIZENS TO PRACTICE AUSTERITY IN VIEW OF WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS. BEJARES IS ACTING MORE AND MORE AS GOC SPOKESMAN ON GENERAL TOPICS, IN CONTRAST TO MORE LIMITED ROLE OF HIS PREDECESSOR. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PRESS CONFERENCE FEB. 1. MIN.SEC.GEN OF GOVT. GEN. HERNAN BEJARES STATED PRESENT GOVT. WILL NOT RETURN ADMINISTRATION OF CHILE TO THE POLITICIANS "UNTIL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE IS FULLY CONSOLIDATED, AND THAT MAY NOT BE ACHIEVED IN 3, 4, 5, OR EVEN 10 YEARS". BEJARES BLASTED "HYPOCRISY/ OF EXILED CHILEAN MARXISTS WHO SEEK TO CREATE PROBLEMS FOR CHILE'S DEVELOPMENT, THEREBY
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SHOWING THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN TRYING TO RECOVER LOST

POSITIONS THAN IN IMPROVING THE LOT OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. EVEN WITHIN CHILE, HE CONTINUED, THERE ARE "SOME MINOR GROUPS" WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT JOINING THE UP POLITICIANS IN CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVT., SINCE "THEY ARE NOT LISTENED TO NOR ARE THEIR PROPOSALS ACCEPTED" (READ CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS). BEJARES ARGUED THAT "THE VICIOUS PRACTICES OF PARTISAN POLITICS" IN CHILE HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED, AND CITED AS EXAMPLE THAT CITIZENS NO LONGER NEED POLITICAL INFLUENCE TO GET GOVT'S EAR. FINALLY, FEJARES ARGUED THAT PRESENT GOC IS NOT A MILITARY GOVT. BUT A NATIONALISTIC ONE, SINCE "IT REPRESENTS THE SPIRIT OF ALL CHILEANS WHO PLACE THE NATIONAL WELFARE AHEAD OF PERSONAL BENEFIT."

3. PREVIOUS DAY BEJARES ALSO HELD PRESS CONFERENCE, THIS TIME DEVOTED TO A RINGING CALL TO CHILEANS TO PRACTICE AUSTERITY IN VIEW OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS, WHICH WILL IMPACT SHARPLY IN CHILE. MANY CHILEANS APPEAR TO BE UNAWARE OF OR INDIFFERENT TO THIS CRISIS, HE CONTINUED, BUT ALL CITIZENS WILL HAVE TO MAKE HARD SACRIFICES. HE SHARPLY DENIED THAT GOC'S INTERNAL ECONOMIC POLICY WAS IN ANY WAY RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPORT/IMPORT PRICE CRUNCH AND CONSEQUENT SERIOUS BOP PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: BEJARES' TWO DECLARATIONS ARE REFLECTIVE OF GOV THINKING AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS. WE DO NOT RECALL ANY OTHER RECENT GOC STATEMENT HEAVILY IMPLYING PRESENT MILITARY GOVT. PLANS TO STAY IN POWER FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS.

5. IN TWO MONTHS SINCE BEJARES REPLACED COL. PEDRO EWING, HE HAS COME TO FOREFRONT AS INCREASINGLY ACTIVE AND PROMINENT GOC SPOKESMAN. GRANTED THAT PART OF HIS JOB IS TO ACT AS OFFICIAL VOICE OF JUNTA, HE HAS ALREADY VENTURED INTO MORE COMMENTARIES ON GENERAL SITUATION, OF WHICH ABOVE ARE TYPICAL, THAN EWING EVER MADE. THIS ACTIVITY PRESUMABLY REFLECTS BEJARBO' CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF, HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO PINOCHET, AND FACT HE IS A GENERAL OFFICER. HE IS BECOMING A MAN TO WATCH.
POPPER

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